UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CN.10/166
24 April 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: CHINESE/ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION
1992 substantive session
New York, 20 April-11 May 1992
Agenda item 5

PROCESS OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY, WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Letter dated 24 April 1992 from the Head of the Chinese delegation addressed to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission

I have the honour to transmit to you a document entitled "Working Paper: China's Basic Position on the Process of Nuclear Disarmament in the Framework of International Peace and Security, with the Objective of the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons". The Chinese text and its English translation are enclosed herewith.

I would be grateful if you would kindly arrange to have this text circulated as a document of the Disarmament Commission of this session.

(Signed) HOU Zhitong
Head of the Chinese delegation
to the 1992 session of the
United Nations Disarmament Commission

Annex

China's Basic Position on the Process of Nuclear Disarmament in the Framework of International Peace and Security, with the Objective of the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Working paper submitted by China

I. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PROCESS AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

1. In recent years, the international situation has undergone tremendous changes and is now at a major turning point. The old world structure has crumbled, and the new one is yet to take shape. The old balance in the world has been deflected and a new round of division and realignment has started. The disintegration of the Soviet Union marks a turning point in the transitional period towards a multi-polar world structure. The tense confrontation between the two main military blocs has come to an end, and some regional problems have been or are being settled. However, the existing factors of tension have not been totally eliminated and more new factors of instability have cropped up. The world is by no means tranquil. Peace and development, the two major issues with which the world has been confronted for many years, have remained unsolved. The international community is more anxious to see the establishment of a new international political and economic order.

2. Arms control and disarmament, including nuclear arms control and disarmament, are important means to achieve international peace and security. The realization of effective nuclear disarmament will contribute to the relaxation of international tension and the alleviation of contradictions and confrontations, thus promoting international peace and security.

II. REVIEW OF STEPS TAKEN IN THE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PROCESS

In recent years, the long-standing stagnation in the field of international nuclear disarmament has been somewhat improved and some initial results have been achieved in the endeavour for nuclear disarmament. The United States and the former Soviet Union made some headway in their bilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. After lengthy negotiations, they finally concluded a treaty on the total destruction of all their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles and an agreement on the reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons. The two sides also declared, respectively, their plans for partial reduction of their tactical nuclear weapons and nuclear confidence-building measures. The United States and the Russian Federation have put forward successively proposals on further reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. All of these are welcome developments.

However, such progress is preliminary and limited, and they still have a long way to go in the process of nuclear disarmament. The above-mentioned

agreement on reduction of strategic nuclear weapons is yet to be ratified and implemented, and other plans and proposals negotiated and materialized. It is the hope of the international community that relevant countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States will continue to cooperate effectively with each other in order to ensure the safety of nuclear weapons and prevent nuclear proliferation. It is obvious that even after the countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals have cut their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their agreements and announcements, they will still possess the largest number of nuclear weapons in the world, which continue to be a serious threat to international security and are still more than enough to destroy the whole of mankind several times over. Their arms talks have so far focused mainly on the question of quantity, and the qualitative improvement of their nuclear armaments has not come to a halt. Meanwhile, they are still developing space weaponry by applying the most sophisticated scientific and technological achievements, and considering building jointly a so-called global defence system against nuclear weapons. This will inevitably extend the current arms race to outer space, thereby adding a new threat to world peace. Therefore, they still have a special responsibility in nuclear disarmament.

III. MEASURES FOR THE ACCELERATION OF THE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PROCESS

1. The acceleration of the nuclear disarmament process should make complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons its final objective. In order to realize this lofty target, countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should assume their special responsibility to take the lead in halting the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and drastically cut all types of nuclear weapons deployed at home and abroad, thus creating conditions for convening a broadly representative international conference on nuclear disarmament with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States.

2. All the nuclear weapons cut by the above-mentioned countries should be destroyed and the nuclear warheads duly disposed of so as to guarantee that they will not be used again for military purposes. Such reduction and destruction should not be confined merely to the nuclear weapons on their territories and in Europe, but should also include those deployed by them in the Asia-Pacific region so as to facilitate peace and security in all regions of the world.

3. Since a nuclear-test ban and nuclear disarmament are closely linked, the objective of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban should be reached within the context of an effective nuclear disarmament process. Countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals have conducted the most nuclear tests, numbering about 1,600 to date. Therefore, they have the obligation to take the lead in halting all nuclear tests and carrying out drastic nuclear disarmament so as to create conditions for a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests. Other countries concerned may, in line with their own national conditions, give positive consideration to participating in the international seismological

data exchange experiment so as to accumulate experience for the future establishment of an international verification system for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

4. Pending the realization of complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, as an effective measure for the prevention of nuclear war, all nuclear-weapon States should undertake the following commitments:

(a) Not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and conclude an international agreement on not being the first to use nuclear weapons;

(b) Not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones, and conclude an international legal instrument in this regard;

(c) To support the proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, respect their status and undertake the corresponding obligations.

5. Countries that have deployed nuclear weapons abroad should pull back all these weapons to their own territories.

6. Major space powers should halt the arms race in outer space and the development of space weapons, especially nuclear-related space weapons.

7. The prevention of nuclear proliferation is a measure in the process towards complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. The prevention of nuclear proliferation will contribute to the maintenance of world peace and security. The prevention of nuclear proliferation is linked with nuclear disarmament, and they are complementary to each other. Major progress in the field of nuclear disarmament can genuinely strengthen the authority of a nuclear non-proliferation regime, while the maintenance of an effective nuclear non-proliferation regime can create favourable conditions for complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Prevention of nuclear proliferation and acceleration of the nuclear disarmament process should not be a hindrance to international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The adoption of appropriate measures by the parties concerned in the cooperation to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, including nuclear explosive devices, constitutes a prerequisite for any successful cooperation in this respect.

8. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones based on agreements reached on a voluntary basis and through negotiations by the countries concerned in different regions of the world in line with the actual conditions of their respective regions is conducive to nuclear disarmament and the security and stability of all regions.

9. In parallel to nuclear disarmament, drastic reductions should be made in conventional armamaments. Nuclear and conventional disarmaments are closely

linked and complimentary to each other. Regions with a high concentration of conventional armaments and countries with the largest conventional armaments and countries with the largest conventional arsenals should take the lead in adopting concrete measures to cut their conventional armaments. The armed forces thus reduced should be disbanded and weapons and equipment destroyed or turned to civilian uses. They should be neither transferred to or redeployed in other regions, nor sold to other countries.

10. Countries with the largest arsenals should, at the same time, drastically cut their naval and especially their naval nuclear armaments and long-range naval forces.

IV. ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR THE ACCELERATION OF THE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PROCESS

The disarmament process, including nuclear disarmament, will inevitably be restrained and affected by the international environment. The creation of a peaceful and stable international environment is conducive to the implementation of effective nuclear disarmament. Therefore:

1. All countries should respect each other's sovereignty, treat each other as equals, try to seek common ground while putting aside differences, live in harmony and carry out friendly cooperation.

2. No country should seek hegemony or try to manipulate international affairs, or pursue power politics.

3. All States, large or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, should participate in the settlement of international affairs as equal members of the international community.

4. Every State has the right to choose independently its own social, political and economic systems and its own path of development in the light of its own national conditions. No country should interfere in the internal affairs of other countries under any pretext or impose its own ideology, values or mode of development on other countries.

5. All countries should observe the principle of mutual respect for territorial integrity and inviolability of national borders, and no country should be allowed to invade or annex the territories of other countries under whatever pretexts.

6. Disputes between States should be settled in a reasonable manner by peaceful means, and the use or threat of force is impermissible in international relations.

V. ROLE OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT MECHANISMS AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Full use must be made of the existing bilateral, regional and multilateral mechanisms, including mechanisms within the United Nations system. At the same time, these mechanisms could be improved and necessary new mechanisms established in line with the changing situation and requirements of the nuclear disarmament process. In this regard, consideration could be given to the relevant recommendations in the report entitled "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament" adopted by consensus at the 1990 session of the Disarmament Commission. 1/

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 42 (A/45/42), pp. 15-19.